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**February 21, 2003
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**VIRGINIA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO INTERSTATE TRAVEL
TO MEET MINOR FOR SEX**

Baltimore - Maryland. Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced today the guilty plea of Brandon Cushing, age 48, of Arlington, Virginia for traveling from Virginia to Maryland to engage in sexual activity with a minor.

According to search warrant affidavits, Cushing entered an America Online (AOL) chat area using the screen name "daddybrndn" and expressed an interest in having sex with a 14 year old girl. An undercover FBI agent used a screen name to pose as a 14 year old female named "Amy" living in Howard County. Cushing approached the undercover agent inside the chat room believing the agent to be a 14 year old girl. After months of chatting over AOL and exchanging e-mails, Chambers stated that he wished to meet Amy for the purpose of having sex. Prior to their meeting and during a recorded telephone call with the undercover FBI agent, Cushing reiterated his desire to meet the 14 year old for sex. Cushing and the agent made arrangements to meet at a Target department store in Ellicott City, Maryland.

On June 19, 2002, at approximately 5:55 a.m, Cushing was observed by FBI agents leaving his Arlington, Virginia home and driving his car to Ellicott City, Maryland. Cushing arrived at the mall at approximately 8:20 a.m. and was arrested by the FBI.

Cushing was charged in a federal indictment in June, 2002 with violating 18 U.S.C. §2423(b) which prohibits interstate travel with intent to engage in a sexual act with a minor. The charge carries a maximum prison sentence of 15 years and a fine of \$250,000. Cushing is scheduled to be sentenced on May 29, 2003 before U.S. District Judge Catherine C. Blake.

The case was investigated by the FBI Innocent Images Task Force and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan P. Luna.